

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY: ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**MARCH 20, 2015**

**H.B. No. 6034 (RAISED): AN ACT AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING  
ON SUNDAY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES**

I submit this testimony as a professional wildlife biologist with over 30 years of experience working in Connecticut.

I strongly **SUPPORT** this bill. There is overwhelming scientific evidence that overabundant deer populations are having devastating impacts on natural ecosystems. There is also overwhelming scientific evidence showing that intensive hunting programs have reduced and stabilized deer populations allowing native plants and animals to recover. There is overwhelming factual data to show that bow hunting is an extremely safe and effective way to reduce deer numbers. It is reasonable to expect that Sunday hunting effort and success rates would be similar to those documented on Saturdays and that the additional harvest could be significant in areas of the state where deer are impacting ecosystems.

I encourage legislators to look at the science and facts regarding this issue. Unnaturally high deer populations are creating an ecological crisis in our state by destroying the ground and shrub layer of vegetation. The destruction of these habitats is a major factor in the decline of many species of birds, mammals, insects and reptiles. Further, overbrowsing of seedlings has jeopardized the ability of existing forests to regenerate themselves. These conditions are worse in areas of the state where firearms deer hunting is either not allowed or impractical due to the patterns of housing development.

H.B. 6034 presents a well-regulated process that allows individual property owners to determine if Sunday hunting will occur on their land by requiring specific written permission for this activity. It provides ecologically-minded landowners with a safe and effective tool to help balance deer populations with their habitat. And it is clearly safe; not a single non-participant has been injured by a bowhunter in Connecticut since passage of the Deer Management Act in 1974.

In the interests of Connecticut's wildlife and ecological stewardship, I encourage you to support this bill.

Thank you,

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